

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03

H-01 INR-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01

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R 261418Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2036

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 14079

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT ET

SUBJECT: ISSUES BETWEEN THE "DIRG" AND THE LATE LG AMAN

REFS: ADDIS 13968

SUMMARY.

THIS MESSAGE LISTS THE ISSUES BETWEEN THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE (PMAS) AND ITS "CHAIRMAN", LG AMAN MICHAEL ANDOM, WHICH ULTIMATELY LED TO AMAN'S ELIMINATION, VIZ., AMAN'S CHARACTER, ROLE AND AUTHORITY; ERITREA; THE EXECUTION OF POLITICAL PRISONERS; AND THE ATTEMPT BY AMAN'S SUPPORTERS TO OBTAIN CONTROL OF THE "DIRG". US MAP MAY ALSO HAVE BEEN FACTOR. END SUMMARY.

(A) ROLE AND AUTHORITY. AMAN SAW HIMSELF AS THE SERVANT OF HIS COUNTRY AND THE INSTRUMENT OF REFORMS HE HAD LONG ADVOCATED. HE RECOGNIZED A GIVE-AND-TAKE RELATIONSHIP HAD TO EXIST BETWEEN HIMSELF AND THE "DIRG", BUT HE WANTED IT TO BE JUST THAT - - A

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TWO-WAY STREET IN WHICH HE WOULD, TO THE DEGREE POSSIBLE, HAVE

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO MATCH THE RESPONSIBILITY OF HIS CHAIRMANSHIPS. "DIRG" DID NOT SEE IT THAT WAY. IT HAD PICKED AMAN TO DO ITS BIDDING. IT SAW ITSELF AS THE PRIME EXPRESSION OF A REVOLUTION WHICH AMAN HAD SUBSEQUENTLY JOINED. IT DISTRUSTED WHAT IT SAW AS AMAN'S ATTEMPTS TO RECREATE THE DOMINANCE OF ONE INDIVIDUAL. THIS WAS DEEPLY FELT, GIVEN THE RISKS TAKEN AND EFFORTS "DIRG" MEMBERS PUT FORTH IN DISESTABLISHING HAILE SELASSIE'S PERSONAL RULE. MOREOVER, THE "DIRG" NO DOUBT FELT THAT THE ASSERTION OF INDIVIDUAL LEADERSHIP COULD OPEN THE DOOR TO POTENTIALLY DIVISIVE RIVALRIES AMONG ITS MEMBERS. TENSION BETWEEN AMAN AND THE "DIRG" APPARENTLY INCREASED DURING THE LAST WEEK OF AMAN'S LIFE. AMAN'S REPORTED RESIGNATIONS AND HIS ILL-CONSIDERED ADAMANT REFUSAL TO COMPROMISE OR BACK DOWN FACED THE "DIRG" WITH WHAT IT CAME TO SEE AS AN ALL-OR-NOTHING CHOICE. THE "DIRG" THEN MOVED TO ELIMINATE THE ONLY FOCUS OF NATIONAL POWER IN THE COUNTRY, OUTSIDE THE "DIRG" AND THE GREATEST THREAT TO ITS CONTINUED RULE. BASICALLY, AMAN OVERPLAYED HIS HAND, APPARENTLY IN THE EXPECTATION OF EFFECTIVE SUPPORT WHICH NEVER MATERIALIZED (BELOW).

(B) ERITREA. THE EXISTENCE OF AN ERITREAN/TIGRE PROBLEM INTERACTED WITH AMAN'S ERITREAN ORIGINS AND HIS CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH FIGURES SUCH AS FONMIN ZEWDE GEBRE SELASSIE AND RAS MENGESHA SEYOUM CLOUDING "DIRG" PERCEPTIONS (SEPTEL) OF AMAN'S MOTIVES. HIS ADVOCACY FOR GRADUALISM, NEGOTIATED COMPROMISES, ETC., EASILY CAME TO BE SEEN BY SOME AND PERHAPS MANY MEMBERS OF THE "DIRG" (PRESUMABLY PARTICULARLY THE LEAST EDUCATED) AS AT BEST EVIDENCE OF THE UNWARRANTED PARTIALITY OF AMAN FOR HIS OWN KIND AND AT WORST AN INDICATION OF THE CHAIRMAN'S EFFORTS TO BUILD AN "APPARAT" OF NORTHERNERS TO SUPPORT HIS DRIVE FOR ASCENDANCY.

(C) EXECUTION OF POLITICAL PRISONERS. THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT AMAN RESISTED PRESSURES FOR THE SUMMARY EXECUTION OF POLITICAL PRISONERS, WHICH ELEMENTS OF THE "DIRG" BEGAN TO ADVOCATE SOME TIME AGO. IN THE VIEW OF THESE ELEMENTS, THE RESPONSIBILITY OF A NUMBER OF DETAINEES FOR SINS OF OMISSION AND COMMISSION IN THE WOLLO DROUGHT DISASTER WAS PLAIN AND REQUIRED THE CAPITAL PENALTY. THE REVOLUTION SHOULD ADMINISTER IT WITHOUT FURTHER ADO.

(D) COUNTERSTROKE. THERE IS FRAGMENTARY BUT PERSUASIVE EVIDENCE THAT AN ATTEMPT WAS BEING MOUNTED BY AMAN'S PARTISANS TO "SEIZE CONTROL" OF THE "DIRG". REPORTS SUGGEST THAT THIS ATTEMPT WAS CONFIDENTIAL

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CENTERED ON THE MILITARY UNITS. SINCE THESE ARE ALSO INTERNALLY FRAGMENTED, IT APPEARS LIKELY THAT THE EFFORT WAS PRIMARILY POLITICAL RATHER THAN MILITARY. THE IDEA APPARENTLY WAS, AT LEAST INITIALLY, TO GET THE UNITS TO REPLACE KNOW-NOTHING "DIRG" MEMBERS BY OTHERS, FEWER IN NUMBER BUT BETTER EDUCATED AND QUALIFIED, AND PRESUMABLY DEEMED MORE RESPONSIVE TO AMAN'S LEADERSHIP. WE HEAR, HOWEVER, THAT "INTERVENTION FROM OUTSIDE (ADDIS)" WAS RPT WAS EXPECTED BY AMAN'S FRIENDS TO THE END.

WE CURRENTLY BELIEVE THAT THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH A COUNTER-STROKE SEEMED WORRISOME ENOUGH TO THE "DIRG" LEADERSHIP TO INDUCE IT TO PREEMPT.

(E) WHILE FOREGOING ISSUES SEEM KEY, OTHER DIFFERENCES COULD HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO EXISTING ANTAGONISMS. US MAP MAY HAVE BEEN ONE SUCH. WE KNOW AMAN RESISTED EFFORTS OF THOSE IN "DIRG" WHO WANTED TO EXPLORE ALTERNATIVES TO US MAP. HE ALSO LIKELY USED HIS INFLUENCE TO PRESERVE, AS POSSIBLE, ETHIOPIA'S POLITICAL ORIENTATION FAVORABLE TO US AND THE WEST, AT LEAST TO DEGREE REQUIRED BY ETHIOPIAN SECURITY INTERESTS AS HE SAW THEM.  
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